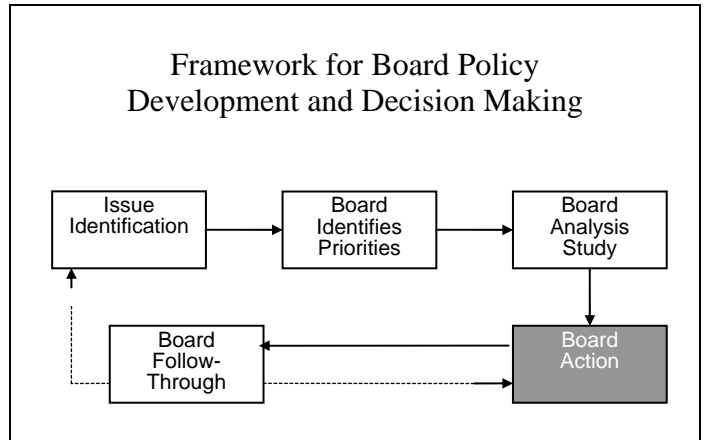


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

July 26, 2007

**Agenda Item:**

Mount Mercy College Practitioner Preparation Program

Iowa Goal:

3. Iowans will pursue higher education that results in an improved quality of life supported by better economic opportunities through high skill employment.

Equity Impact Statement:

These rules support the improvement of instructional practices and strengthen the quality of educator preparation and professional development programs to give educators at all levels the skills they need to improve teaching and learning.

Presenter:

Arlie Willems, Administrative Consultant
Practitioner Preparation
Division of PreK-12 Education Programs

Attachments:

1

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the State Board approve the Mount Mercy College practitioner preparation program through the next state visit cycle scheduled for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Background:

Iowa Code 282—14.102(272) grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. The Mount Mercy College program has met the program approval standards as approved by the State Board.

**Recommendation for Continuing Approval
of
Mount Mercy College**

July 26, 2007

Mount Mercy College, located in Cedar Rapids, was founded in 1928 by the Sisters of Mercy of Cedar Rapids. It began its existence as a junior college in response to the need for such an institution to serve women. In 1957, the college expanded to include a four-year program and became co-educational in 1969. Mount Mercy College remains a private Catholic institution, and is currently accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Mount Mercy College currently enrolls approximately 1500 students, two-thirds of whom are full-time students. The college offers six baccalaureate degrees, with majors in both professional and liberal arts programs. Generally about 15% of the students at Mount Mercy College are pursuing majors in the college's Teacher Education Program. Around 60 candidates are recommended for licensure each year. Mount Mercy offers twenty-seven endorsements, but the majority of education graduates become elementary teachers.

A day-long preliminary review of the Mount Mercy College program was conducted on November 10, 2006, by the State Review Panel and the State Review Team. Comments and questions from that review were sent to the Mount Mercy Program for their response at the time of the review.

The site visit occurred February 4-8, 2007. During that time, team members reviewed documents and interviewed faculty, staff, administrators, students and practitioners affiliated with the Mount Mercy Program. The team examined six standard areas: Governance and Resources, Diversity, Faculty Performance and Development, Clinical Practice, Assessment of Candidate Knowledge, and Assessment of the Program.

CHAPTER 79

STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

General Comments:

- The Mount Mercy Teacher Education Program enjoys a strong reputation for graduating quality teachers.
- The Mount Mercy Program serves a high percentage of transfer students and works closely with Kirkwood Community College to provide a smooth transition for these students.
- Mount Mercy Teacher Education Program faculty deserves the highest commendation for the quality and clarity of the Institutional Report.

STANDARD I: GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The unit appears to have the primary responsibility and authority for appropriate decisions regarding the Teacher Education programs.
- The technology available to the unit is commendable.
- The level of professional development is excellent as evidenced by support for attendance and presentations at professional meetings at the state and national level.
- Full-time faculty members are willing to participate in an innovative system of Education Division shared governance.
- The Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) serves as an important source of information and feedback to the program.
- An effective relationship exists between the Education Division and the library to provide sufficient instructional resources for teacher education students. The curriculum library is a valuable resource for teacher education students; computer resources are available in several locations on campus.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The team cautions the Education Division to monitor closely the effectiveness and the impact of the innovative shared governance structure over the next two to three years.
- 2) All administrative load credit should be part of a faculty member's regular 24 hours per year.
- 3) As the college explores implementing a master's degree program in strong endorsement areas, the division is encouraged to look at the cost effectiveness and benefits of continuing to offer programs that have low enrollments.

Item that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD II: DIVERSITY

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Comments

- The Education Division appears to be maximizing the use of the diverse experiences its faculty brings to the campus based on their previous experiences teaching diverse students in other regions of the country and the world.
- The Education Division is willing to work with the Admissions Office in its effort to recruit a more diverse faculty and student body.
- The program makes a strong effort to provide candidates with experiences in diverse settings.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The team noted a need for greater efforts related to a campus wide focus on increasing diversity and diverse experiences for all students. The institution is fortunate to have a new president who is aware of these concerns.
- 2) Faculty salaries are an issue that may be negatively impacting the recruitment of a diverse faculty.

Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD III: FACULTY

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The unit clearly models best practices in the classroom. Instructional strategies and technology implemented are innovative and current. Faculty members are hardworking, passionate, and dedicated professionals. Candidates comment that the major strength of the unit is the caring, accessible, and knowledgeable faculty.
- Faculty's teaching experiences in the PK-12 classroom are extensive and relevant.
- Strong collaboration exists with colleagues in the unit and with those in other units, with the Iowa Department of Education, and with the broader education community.
- Faculty members are in leadership roles with the college, community, PK-12 schools, and professional organizations. College faculty are recognized across campus for their leadership in the area of student and program assessment.
- Most faculty members far exceed the recommended 40 hours of co-teaching in area classrooms. These co-teaching experiences are rich, varied, and appropriate.
- Education faculty receives very high marks for teaching effectiveness, critical thinking, and student-instructor relationships.

Concerns

- 1) Faculty members are spread very thin; the team suggests that the unit and the administration carefully monitor faculty workload to ensure that high quality teaching and learning, scholarship, and administration continue.
- 2) The college needs to review salaries in order to ensure that they can attract and support high quality education faculty with earned doctorates.

Comments/Recommendations

- The team suggests a formal mentoring system for new faculty as new hires are made in the near future.
- A policy should be created to formalize the qualifications and criteria for part-time faculty as well as for college supervisors.

Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD IV: CLINICAL**Initial Team Finding**

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The hours required for various clinical experiences provide a rich background for on-campus study, exceed state minimum hour requirements, and are designed to reflect state and national standards (Iowa Teaching Standards and INTASC).
- The field experiences are generally integrated into courses, adequately staffed, and have well defined job descriptions.
- Stakeholders in the program feel high standards are being set for pre-service candidates and that faculty convey expectations for excellence in teaching to students throughout the program.
- The program recently began to gather demographic (diversity, socioeconomic status, etc.) data on area schools and to track students' placements in diverse settings.

COMMENTS FROM COOPERATING TEACHERS/PRINCIPALS

- Cooperating teachers and principals state that student teachers have strong classroom management skills, display professional demeanor, confidence and enthusiasm, and adapt well to classroom/building policies.
- Cooperating teachers greatly appreciate the weekly visits from supervisors and thus have quick access to help in addressing concerns.
- Cooperating teachers report strong technology skills and effective and appropriate use of the internet in the classroom.
- Public school personnel have high regard for the level of professionalism and dedication of the teacher education faculty.
- Cooperating teachers appreciate the annual workshop offered by the department.

COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS/STUDENT TEACHERS:

- Student teachers felt well supported in clinical placements.

- Students feel faculty are well aware of best classroom practice and are current with policies and procedures that govern schools today.

COMMENTS FROM ADJUNCTS

- Adjunct supervisors feel well prepared to work with Mt. Mercy students in the clinical setting and feel the department does an excellent job of communicating program standards to them.
- When concerns arise with a student in a clinical placement, adjuncts feel supported by the department.

QUOTES FROM ADMINISTRATORS, COOPERATING TEACHERS AND STUDENT TEACHERS

- “Faculty are enthusiastic about teaching themselves and convey this to the candidates.”
- “Best practice is modeled on a regular basis to the students by the teaching faculty.”
- “Mt. Mercy has an excellent system of evaluation from early clinical experiences through to student teaching which helps candidates know what they need to work on.”
- “Candidates understand assessment data and are able to incorporate it into educational decision making.”
- “I take Mt. Mercy students into my building whenever possible because of the strong program.”

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) Some cooperating teachers reported feeling uncertain about how involved early practicum students should be, especially in the secondary program.
- 2) Increased communication with the other academic departments of the college is encouraged, especially regarding secondary endorsement areas.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD V: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- A variety of core performances are utilized and documented to indicate candidate proficiency.
- Self-evaluation is strong for both candidates and faculty.
- Screening prior to student teaching is thorough.
- Students feel very prepared to work with students who have diverse learning and behavioral needs.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) Although science and math requirements meet state minimums, the program is encouraged to strengthen these content areas for elementary majors.
- 2) Dispositions are assessed frequently but with a limited number of items.

- 3) The team also encourages the Division to look at the scheduling of endorsement courses; many of these courses are only offered at night and on an every other year basis, creating scheduling issues for some candidates.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD VI: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Initial Team Findings

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The performance assessment system is integrated in the unit's planning and evaluation system.
- Data driven decisions are made for program improvement.
- Alumni are surveyed on an annual basis and the data is used for program improvement.
- A variety of mechanisms are used to assess both content and pedagogical knowledge.
- Rubrics for core performance assignments are detailed and provide clear expectations.
- Becoming a reflective practitioner is highlighted throughout the program.
- Admission to and progression through the program is selective through a vigorous gatekeeping process.
- The tracking of students' progress (C-base, evaluations, etc) through TEP is thorough and useful for making data driven decisions for individual students.
- PREP, the program designed for licensed teachers who are seeking additional endorsements, is well crafted to meet professional development needs in the region.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The program is encouraged to strengthen the data collected by teacher candidates regarding PK-12 student learning.
- 2) The program is encouraged to provide enhanced quality control in requiring a stronger alignment of candidate artifacts with the standards in portfolios.
- 3) The Education Division's assessment system is complex and requires considerable time to gather and organize data. At this point in time, the human demands for maintaining the system may not be worth the returns; hopefully the use of LiveText will improve this situation.
- 4) The program is encouraged to seek systematic feedback from employers as well as cooperating teachers and graduates. Through the Teacher Quality Enhancement (TQE) grant, the Department of Education will provide information that facilitates this type of survey.

Item that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: Please provide a plan to initiate a survey of graduates' employers to assess the quality of graduates' performance.

Mount Mercy Program Response: The Mount Mercy Program has initiated a plan for a common survey among programs across the state using demographic information supplied by the Iowa Department of Education on new teachers in Iowa.

Final Recommendation: Now that the above item has been addressed, the standard area is met.

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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